

Chinese Society

Get-Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

In the last section, you learned about the rise and fall of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties. During those dynasties, China's economy began to grow again. Chinese inventors developed many new technologies, and Chinese artists and writers produced new works that are still admired today.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- The Tang dynasty strengthened China's economy by supporting farming and trade. (page 417)
- The Chinese developed new technologies, such as steelmaking and printing. (page 418)
- During the Tang and the Song dynasties, China enjoyed a golden age of art and literature. (page 420)

Locating Places

Changan (CHAHNG•AHN)

Meeting People

Li Bo (LEE BOH)

Duo Fu (DWAU FOO)

Building Your Vocabulary

porcelain (POHR•suh•luhn)

calligraphy (kuh•LIH•gruh•fee)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Complete a chart like the one below describing the new technologies developed in China during the Middle Ages.



When & Where?



A.D. 600

A.D. 618

Tang dynasty takes power

A.D. 900

A.D. 868

Chinese print world's first complete book

1200

c. 1150

Chinese sailors are the first to use compass

A Growing Economy

Main Idea The Tang dynasty strengthened China's economy by supporting farming and trade.

Reading Focus Do you know anyone who drinks tea or wears silk clothing? Both of these goods were first produced in China. Read to learn how farming changed under the Tang dynasty.

When the Han dynasty in China collapsed in the A.D. 200s, it was a disaster for China's economy. As fighting began, cities were damaged and farms were burned. Artisans made fewer goods, farmers grew fewer crops, and merchants had less to trade. Under the Tang dynasty, these problems were solved.

Why Did Farming Improve? When the Tang rulers took power in A.D. 618, they brought peace to the countryside and gave more land to farmers. As a result, farmers were able to make many advances. They improved

irrigation and introduced new ways of growing their crops. Farmers also developed new kinds of rice, which grew well in poor soil, produced more per acre, grew faster, and were resistant to disease.

These changes helped farmers grow more and more rice. China's farmers also began to grow tea, which became a popular drink. They made improvements in other crops as well. With more food available, the number of people in China greatly increased. At the same time, more people moved southward, where rice grew abundantly in the Chang Jiang valley.

China's Trade Grows Tang rulers also had roads and waterways built. These changes made travel within and outside of China much easier. Chinese merchants were able to increase trade with people in other parts of Asia. The Silk Road, now under Tang control, once again bustled with activity.




▲ A worker holds a tray of silkworms eating mulberry leaves. Eventually the worms will spin cocoons. Workers then collect and unravel the cocoons to make silk thread.
Why do you think silk is still expensive today?

▼ Silk, shown here being harvested, remained an important trade item for the Chinese. **How did Tang rulers help increase trade?**



One of the items traded by the Chinese was silk fabric. This product gave the road its name and was popular in markets to the west of China. In addition, China traded tea, steel, paper, and porcelain. **Porcelain** (POHR•suh•luhn) is made of fine clay and baked at high temperatures. In return, other countries sent China products such as gold, silver, precious stones, and fine woods.

Other trade routes were also established. Roads linked China to central Asia, India, and southwest Asia. In addition, the Tang opened new ports along China's coast to boost trade.

 **Reading Check Cause and Effect** How did the new kinds of rice developed in China help its population grow?

New Technology

Main Idea The Chinese developed new technologies, such as steelmaking and printing.

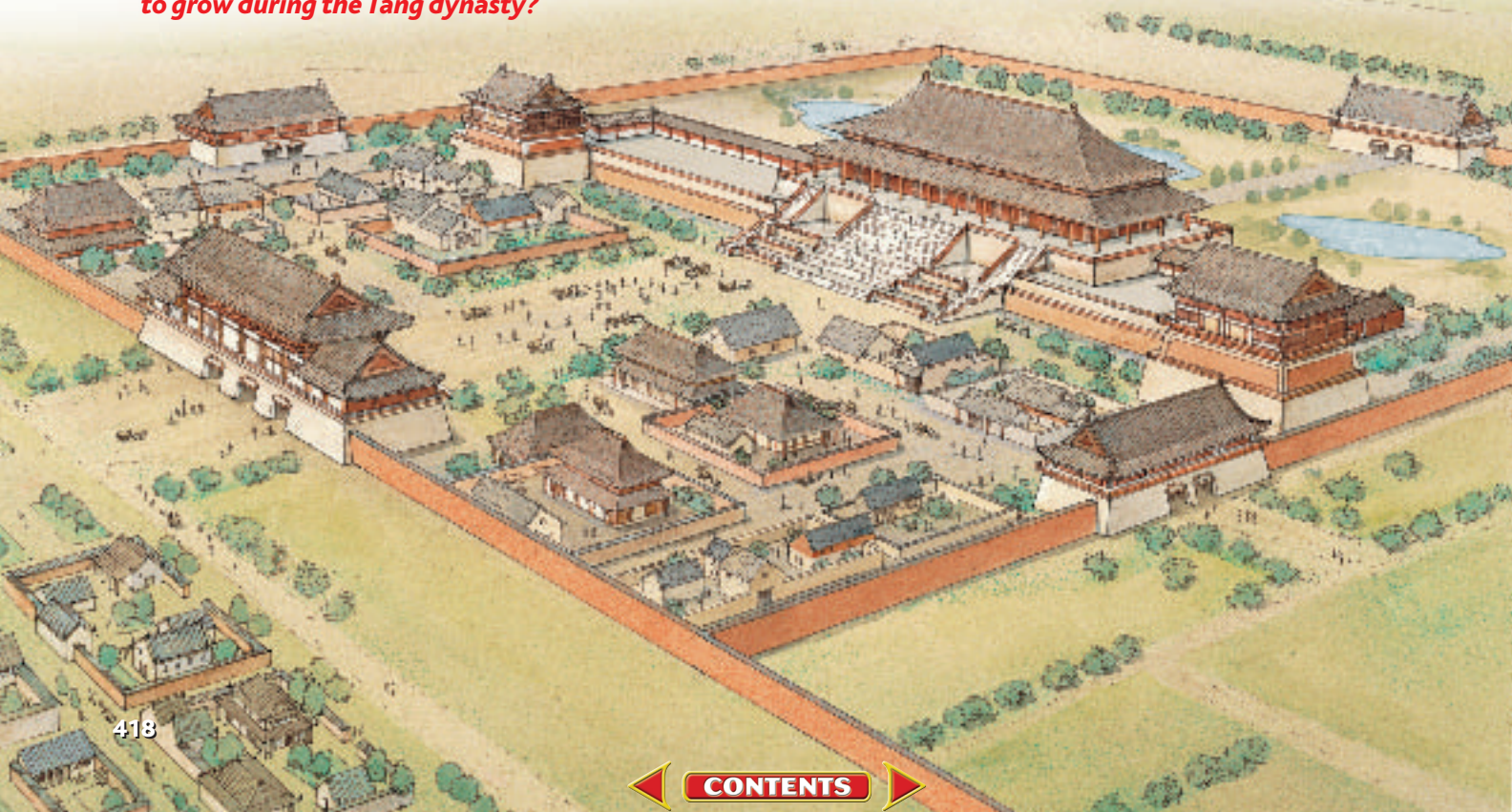
Reading Focus This book is made of paper with letters printed on the paper by a machine. Read to learn how printing was first invented in China during the Tang dynasty.

During the Tang and Song dynasties, new inventions changed China's society. In time, these discoveries spread to other parts of the world.

China Discovers Coal and Steel For most of China's history, people burned wood to heat their homes and cook their food. By

Changan's Royal Palace

The Tang capital city of Changan may have had a population of one million people at its peak. The city had large blocks that included houses, businesses, and temples set along straight streets. Its layout inspired the design of many later cities. The area containing the royal palace, shown below, was bordered by parklands. **What improvements to agriculture allowed China's population to grow during the Tang dynasty?**



the time of the Tang dynasty, wood was becoming scarce in China. However, the Chinese had discovered that coal could be used to heat things, and soon a coal-mining industry developed.

The Chinese used coal to heat furnaces to high temperatures, which led to another discovery. When iron was produced in hot furnaces heated by coal, the molten iron mixed with carbon from the coal. This created a new, stronger metal known today as steel.

The Chinese used steel to make many things. They made armor, swords, and helmets for their army, but they also made stoves, farm tools, drills, steel chain, and even steel nails and sewing needles.

The Printing Process Another Chinese invention was a method for printing books. Before printing, books had to be copied by hand. As a result, few books were made, and they were very expensive. The Chinese began printing in the A.D. 600s. They used blocks of wood on which they cut the characters of an entire page. Ink was placed over the wooden block. Then paper was laid on the block to make a print. Cutting the block took a long time. When they were completed, however, the woodblocks could be used again and again to make many copies.

The Chinese soon began printing books. The earliest known printed book dates from about A.D. 868. It is a Buddhist book called the *Diamond Sutra*. The invention of printing was very important. It helped to spread ideas more rapidly.

In the A.D. 1000s, a Chinese printer named Pi Sheng (BEE SHUHNG) invented movable type for printing. With movable type, each character is a separate piece. The pieces can be moved around to make sentences and used again and again. Pi Sheng made his pieces from clay and put them together to produce book pages. However,

The Way It Was

Science and Inventions

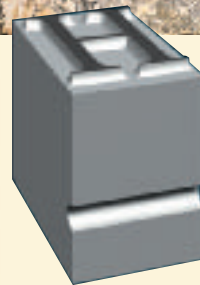
Printing When the Chinese invented movable type, they improved the art of printing. A Chinese author described the work of Pi Sheng:

"He took sticky clay and cut in it characters as thin as the edge of a copper coin. Each character formed as it were a single type. He baked them in the fire to make them hard. He had previously prepared an iron plate and he had covered this plate with a mixture of pine resin, wax, and paper ashes. When he wished to print, he took an iron frame and set it on the iron plate. In this he placed the type, set close together. When the frame was full, the whole made one solid block of type."

—Shên Kua, *Dream Pool Jottings*



◀ The *Diamond Sutra* is the earliest known printed book.



▲ Movable type block



▲ Composing stick


Connecting to the Past

1. Why do you think Pi Sheng used clay to make his characters?
2. In what instance would woodblock printing have been a better method to use than movable type?

because written Chinese has so many characters, woodblock printing was easier and quicker than using movable type.

Other Chinese Inventions The Chinese made gunpowder for use in explosives. One weapon was the fire lance, an ancestor of the gun. It used gunpowder and helped make the Chinese army a strong force. The Chinese also used gunpowder to make fireworks.

The Chinese also built large ships with rudders and sails. About 1150, Chinese sailors began using the compass to help them find their way. This let ships sail farther from land.

 **Reading Check Analyze** Why was the invention of printing so important?

Primary Source

Li Bo

In the following poem, Li Bo writes about parting from a friend.

"Green hills sloping from the northern wall,
white water rounding the eastern city: once
parted from this place the lone weed
tumbles ten thousand miles.

Drifting clouds—a
traveler's thoughts;
setting sun—an old
friend's heart.

Wave hands and let
us take leave now,
hsiao-hsiao our
hesitant horses
neighing."

—Li Bo,
"Seeing a
Friend Off"



▲ Li Bo

DBQ Document-Based Question

How are drifting clouds like a traveler's thoughts?

Art and Literature

Main Idea During the Tang and the Song dynasties, China enjoyed a golden age of art and literature.

Reading Focus If you were to choose one poem to read to the class, which poem would it be? Below, you will read a poem that is a Chinese favorite.

The Tang and Song eras were a golden age for Chinese culture. The invention of printing helped to spread Chinese ideas and artwork. Chinese rulers actively supported art and literature, and invited artists and poets to live and work in the capital city of **Changan** (CHAHNG • AHN).

What Was Tang Poetry Like? Chinese writers best expressed themselves in poems. In fact, the Tang dynasty is viewed as the great age of poetry in China. Some Tang poems celebrated the beauty of nature, the thrill of seasons changing, and the joy of having a good friend. Other Tang poems expressed sadness for the shortness of life and mourned the cruelty of friends parting.

Li Bo (LEE BOH) was one of the most popular poets of the Tang era. His poems often centered on nature. The poem below by Li Bo is probably the best-known poem in China. For centuries, Chinese schoolchildren have had to memorize it. Its title is "Still Night Thoughts."

“Moonlight in front of my bed—
I took it for frost on the ground!
I lift my eyes to watch the
mountain moon,
lower them and dream of home.”

—Li Bo,
"Still Night Thoughts"

Another favorite poet of that time was **Duo Fu** (DWAU FOO). He was a poor civil servant who had a hard life. Civil war swept



▲ This Chinese landscape was painted in the 1100s. *How were Daoist beliefs depicted in landscapes painted during the Song dynasty?*

▼ Chinese calligraphy



▲ Ink and watercolor drawing on silk

China, and food was hard to find. Duo Fu nearly died of starvation. His problems opened his eyes to the sufferings of the common people.

As a result, Duo Fu's poems often were very serious. They frequently dealt with issues such as social injustice and the problems of the poor. Duo Fu wrote the poem below after a rebellion left the capital city in ruins. It is called "Spring Landscape."

“Rivers and mountains survive
broken countries.
Spring returns. The city grows
lush again.
Blossoms scatter tears thinking of
us, and this
Separation in a bird's cry startles
the heart.

Beacon-fires have burned
through three months.
By now, letters are worth ten
thousand in gold.

. ”

—Duo Fu,
"Spring Landscape"

Painting in Song China The painting of landscapes became widespread during the Song dynasty. However, Chinese artists did not try to make exact pictures of the landscapes they were painting. Instead, they wished to portray the "idea" of the mountains, lakes, and other features of their landscapes. Also, empty spaces were left in the paintings on purpose. This is because of the Daoist belief that a person cannot know the whole truth about something.

Daoist beliefs also can be seen in the way people are portrayed. They are tiny figures, fishing in small boats or wandering up a hillside trail. In other words, the people are living in, but not controlling, nature. They are only a part of the harmony of the natural setting.

Chinese painters often wrote poetry on their works. They used a brush and ink to write beautiful characters called **calligraphy** (kuh • LIH • gruh • fee).

Chinese Porcelain During the Tang period, Chinese artisans perfected the making of porcelain. Because porcelain later came from



◀ Ceramic figures from Tang dynasty tomb

These porcelain figures from the Tang dynasty show travelers on horseback. **What is porcelain sometimes called today?**



▲ Tang dynasty bottle

China to the West, people today sometimes call porcelain by the name “china.”

Porcelain can be made into plates, cups, figurines, and vases. In A.D. 851 an Arab traveler described the quality of Tang porcelain: “There is in China a very fine clay from which are made vases. . . . Water in these

vases is visible through them, and yet they are made of clay.”

The technology for making porcelain spread to other parts of the world. It finally reached Europe in the 1700s.

Reading Check Identify What did Duo Fu often write about?

Section 2 Review

History online

Homework Helper Need help with the material in this section? Visit jag.glencoe.com

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- During the Tang dynasty, both farming and trade flourished, and the empire grew much larger than ever before.
- Many important inventions were developed in China during the Tang and Song dynasties, including steel, printing, and gunpowder.
- Chinese literature and arts, including poetry, landscape painting, and porcelain making, reached new heights during the Tang and Song dynasties.

What Did You Learn?

1. What products were traded by China along the Silk Road?
2. What were some of the subjects of Tang poetry?
4. **Summarize** Describe the changes to Chinese agriculture during the Tang dynasty.
5. **Contrast** How do the two forms of printing invented by the Chinese differ?

Critical Thinking

3. **Organizing Information** Draw a chart to describe the new technologies developed in China.
6. **Evaluate** Which invention of the Tang and Song dynasties do you think has been most important? Explain.
7. **Creative Writing** Read the poem “Still Night Thoughts” by Li Bo again. Then write a short, four-stanza poem similar to Li Bo’s about the view from your bedroom or kitchen window.

Metalworking	
Printing	
Weapons	
Sailing	